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TWO HISTORIC DISSERTATIONS.

I.

ON

THE SILESIAN WAR,

CONCLUDED

BY THE TREATY OF BRESLAU, 1742.

II.

ON

THE CHARACTER AND CONDUCT

OF

LOUIS XVI. KING OF FRANCE,

SUBSEQUENT TO THE REVOLUTION, 1798.

BY WILLIAM BELSHAM.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR G. G. AND J. ROBINSON, PATERNOSTER-ROW;

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M. DCCC.

PREFACE.

TO the Edition of the Hiſtory of GREAT-BRITAIN now in contemplation of the Author, but the public appearance of which is remote and uncertain, it is his intention to annex Six Hiſtoric Diſſertations, containing original vouchers for ſuch parts of the work as may be regarded either as moſt important or moſt problematic.

The Diſſertations are on the following ſubjects :—

I. On the Character of the Earl of Shafteſbury.
II. On the Miniſterial Seceſſion, 1717.
III. On the Treaty of Hanover, 1725.
IV. On the Firſt Sileſian War, 1740-2.
V. On the Adminiſtration of Mr. Haſtings.
VI. On the Character of Louis XVI.

Four of theſe have already been ſubmitted, in one mode or other, to the public eye. But as the purchaſers of the various editions of the Hiſtory actually printed, are entitled to every reaſonable and practicable accommodation, it has been deemed expedient to publiſh the remaining ones ſeparately, both in quarto and octavo, in order, if the poſſeſſors of the Hiſtory ſo pleaſe, to bind with the different copies of the work.

A very

A very rare and curious Indian publication having recently been put into the hands of the Author, ſome extracts from which he purpoſes hereafter to ſubjoin to the Diſſertation, comprizing the ſubſtance of the Anſwer to Major Scott's Obſervations, he has embraced the preſent opportunity to offer them alſo to the Public in a diſtinct and ſeparate form.

ON

ON

THE SILESIAN WAR,

A. D. 1740.

TERMINATED BY THE TREATY OF BRESLAU,

A. D. 1742.

THOUGH it would be abſurd and ludicrous to enter into a very formal diſcuſſion, and much leſs vindication of the claims of the King of Pruſſia, reſpecting Sileſia, yet as a matter of hiſtoric curioſity, it may not be improper conciſely to ſtate the nature of them. The principality of Jagerndorf with its dependencies, appertaining to that extenſive province, itſelf a fief of the kingdom of Bohemia, was in the beginning of the ſeventeenth century in poſſeſſion of a younger branch of the Brandenburg family, the Margrave John George; who having eſpouſed the cauſe of the unfortunate Frederic, Elector Palatine, was outlawed by the Emperor Ferdinand II. and his principality confiſcated, notwithſtanding the reſiſtance and proteſt of the Electoral Houſe of Brandenburg, who, on the extinction of the Margravian line, conſidered themſelves as the lawful heirs of the principality.

The Dutchy of Lignitz alſo, and ſeveral adjoining diſtricts, were, in virtue of an antient treaty of con-fraternity, formally deviſed by the laſt Duke to the Elector Frederick William, commonly ſtiled the Great Elector. But the Court of Vienna, refuſing to acquieſce in this diſpoſition, a treaty was at length concluded at Berlin, A. D. 1686, by which the Court of Berlin relinquiſhed all her obſolete and hopeleſs pretenſions, not only to the Dutchy of Lignitz, but to the Principality of

Jagendorf, in exchange for the ſmall territory of Schwibus in Sileſia. And even this was ſhortly after reſtored to the Imperial Court by the ſucceeding Elector, Frederic I. King of Pruſſia, who received for the ſame an equivalent, or ſatisfaction, in money.

In his public Manifeſto, the reigning Monarch declared that his anceſtor had been inveigled into making the ceſſion in queſtion, inferring from this circumſtance the nullity of the treaty, and the juſtice of a claim which had not been heard of for half a century. But this plea he had too much reſpect for his readers to admit into his hiſtory. He inſiſts, however, with ſome apparent reaſon, on the invalidity of the aſſent given by the late King to the edict of the Pragmatic Sanction, which he ſays was wholly conditional; being inſeparably connected with the reciprocal guarantee of the ſucceſſion of Bergue and Juliers by the Emperor Charles. But ſuch was the weakneſs and duplicity of this prince, that he ſcrupled not at the ſame time to grant the Imperial guarantee of that diſputed ſucceſſion to the Houſes of Brandenburg, Saxony, and Sultzbach.

The thoughts of the King of Pruſſia were, however, much leſs engaged in weighing the equity of his own pretenſions, than in deviſing means to render them effective. " Frederic I." ſays this Monarch, with his characteriſtic frankneſs, " En erigeant la Pruſſe en Royaume " avoit par cette vain grandeur, mis un germe d'ambition dans ſa poſ- " terité, qui devoit fructifier tôt ou tard." " The King determined, as he tells us, on a mature conſideration of the forlorn ſituation of Auſtria, whoſe finances were miſerably deranged, whoſe armies were ruined by the late unſucceſsful war with Turkey, and which was now governed by a young Princeſs, without experience, under the additional diſadvantage of a doubtful title, to aſſert, what in his manifeſto he is pleaſed to ſtile his inconteſtible rights to Sileſia." So chimerical, nevertheleſs, did his claims appear to the Court of Vienna, that when in conſequence of the military preparations actually carrying on in the Pruſſian dominions, M. Damrath, the Imperial Envoy at Berlin, warned his Court that a ſtorm was gathering which might poſſibly burſt over that province;

vince; the Council of the Queen replied, "Nous ne voulons ni ne pouvons, ajouter foi aux nouvelles, que vous nous mandez."

A war with the Houſe of Auſtria, notwithſtanding its preſent ſtate of depreſſion, appeared in the view of the King of Pruſſia himſelf ſo novel and daring an undertaking, and the final iſſue ſo doubtful, that he would readily have compounded his claims for a very moderate equivalent. "My intention," ſays this Monarch, in a letter addreſſed to the Count de Gotter, his Miniſter at Vienna, "is not to diſturb the "repoſe of Europe, and much leſs that of the Empire. This is a reſo- "lution which I will endeavour to preſerve, and I will do my utmoſt "to remove the obſtacles that may be formed againſt ſo ſalutary an "end as that which I propoſe to myſelf, which tends only to ſecure "the liberty of the Germanic Body, and ſupport the Houſe of Auſtria. "—I have declared to the Court of Vienna the motives to this ſtep, in "ſuch a manner, as will in a ſhort time convince that Court, as well as "all Germany and the reſt of Europe, of the uprightneſs of my inten- "tions. And you may mention to the Duke of Tuſcany, that I may "even abate ſomething of my demands, upon condition that the Queen "of Hungary will be pleaſed to agree with me in a reaſonable and ſincere "accommodation, and enter into cloſe engagements ſuitable to our "reciprocal intereſts."

The King of Pruſſia ſoon afterwards declared his readineſs to accept the Dutchy of Glogau and ſome adjacent diſtricts, in lieu of all his pretenſions; to enter into ſtrict alliance with the Queen of Hungary, and to guarantee the Auſtrian ſucceſſion, agreeably to the Pragmatic Sanction; to employ his intereſt for the election of the Duke of Lorraine to the Imperial Crown, and to pay two millions of florins as an indemnification for the expences of the war. By acceding to theſe terms, the Queen of Hungary might doubtleſs have firmly eſtabliſhed herſelf in her remaining hereditary poſſeſſions, and ſecured the throne of the Empire to her conſort. But the Auſtrian pride, moſt impolitically foſtered by England, choſe rather to put all to the hazard than to ſacrifice the ſmalleſt iota of its rights. The applications of the Count

de Gotter were treated with ineffable diſdain, and that Miniſter had the boldneſs to ſhew to the Duke of Tuſcany a diſpatch, in which the King had uſed the expreſſion, "Si le Grand Duc veut ſe perdre qu'il "ſe perde." The Courtiers of the Queen declared, in a tone of inſulting raillery, that it did not belong to a Prince whoſe duty it was, in the capacity of Chamberlain of the Empire, to preſent the Emperor with a baſon to waſh his hands, to preſcribe laws to his daughter. The Count Kinſki in particular, who paſſed for the proudeſt man in that proud circle, exclaimed againſt all the propoſitions of the Pruſſian Ambaſſador, "as diſgraceful to be liſtened to by the ſucceſſors of the "Cæſars." And Mr. Robinſon, the Engliſh Ambaſſador at Vienna, affecting to conſider the whole enterprize as an extravagant and inſenſate attempt, proteſted, "that the name of the King of Pruſſia "ought to be ſtruck out of the liſt of politicians."

The vigour, deciſion, and promptitude with which that young Monarch acted on this occaſion, were however, by judges of a different claſs, regarded as indicatory of great ſucceeding events—as the early dawnings of an extraordinary and illuſtrious reign. The attention of all Europe was ſtrongly attracted by ſo bold a ſtep, and the feelings of men were powerfully intereſted and divided in contemplating the cataſtrophe of this political drama. The perſon of the King of Pruſſia, at this period of his life, is by a cotemporary writer thus deſcribed. "His Pruſſian Majeſty is rather under the middle ſtature, very ſtrait, "and extremely well ſhaped, ſomewhat inclining to plumpneſs. He "has a round, ſmooth, and well proportioned face, a fair complexion, "light brown hair, large eyes, grey and ſparkling, his noſe is ſtrait and "handſome, his countenance full of majeſty, but yet pleaſant. He is "ſufficiently ſtrong, very active, and can bear fatigue of ſtudy, travel, "or any exerciſe, to admiration."

It muſt be remarked, that at the period when the King of Pruſſia entered Sileſia, which was little more than two months after the death of the Emperor Charles VI. no other power had declared againſt the Queen of Hungary, whoſe ſucceſſion was guaranteed by almoſt all Europe.

Europe. The Courts of Vienna and London, therefore, hoped to make him quickly repent his temerity. As the original documents relative to the plan, univerſally believed to be projected for diveſting the King of Pruſſia of a part of his dominions, by way of puniſhment for his preſumption, have never been made public, it is impoſſible preciſely to aſcertain what ſhare the King of England took in that dark tranſaction. Tindal, the beſt cotemporary authority, is evidently anxious, when touching on this topic, to avoid whatever might implicate the character of his Sovereign. Speaking of the offers of the King of Pruſſia, he ſays, (Vol. XX. p. 484.) "The Miniſter and his friends ſecretly wiſhed "that they had been accepted; but the nature of *his Majeſty's en-* "*gagements* did not admit of their making any public declaration on "that head." And again, (p. 497.) "The friendſhip of Great Britain "ſerved only to make her Hungarian Majeſty more haughty;—her "Miniſtry formed a ſcheme of general confederacy againſt the King of "Pruſſia, in which his dominions were to be partitioned out, and his "Britannic Majeſty, as Elector of Hanover, was to have his ſhare of "them. It is more than probable, that this project was under a ſtrong "ſeal of ſecreſy communicated to the Court of England, but it is cer-"tain it met there with no approbation. His Pruſſian Majeſty, through "the imprudence of the Auſtrian Miniſtry, came to the knowledge of "this affair, and hearing nothing of it from England, he concluded, or "affected to conclude, that the meaſure had been entered into by his "Britannic Majeſty. He inſtantly formed the deſign of uniting himſelf "cloſely with France, and of joining to raiſe the Elector of Bavaria to "the throne of the Empire."

"In the papers relating to Foreign affairs, laid before Parliament, "January 1742, was found," as the ſame hiſtorian tells us, (p. 459) "A plan of the alliance already noticed between the Queen of Hun-"gary, Great Britain, Holland, Hanover, Saxony, and Muſcovy, in "order to attack Pruſſia all at once, and to make a partition of his "dominions: each power reſerving to itſelf that portion of them it "ſhould conquer. A prodigious clamour was raiſed in England againſt "this project; but all that appeared was, that ſuch a project had been "communicated

" communicated to Count Oſtein, the Imperial Miniſter at London, " and by him tranſmitted to Vienna. But it did not appear that it " came from the Britiſh Miniſtry." An addreſs being preſented by the Houſe of Commons, for letters and memorials, &c. between the Courts of London and Berlin, in order to throw ſome light on this affair; it was artfully evaded in the reply; his Majeſty affirming " that he " had directed all the tranſactions to which it relates to be carefully " examined, in order to ſee how far the ſame may be complied with, " without prejudice to the public, and conſiſtently with the confidence " repoſed in him by other princes." In the ſucceeding ſeſſion, a ſimilar motion was made, for copies of all memorials, &c. which had been ſent to or received from the Court of Vienna. " The chief aim of the " movers," ſays the hiſtorian Tindal, " was to fix upon the late or the " preſent Miniſtry the charge of having contrived that partition of the " Pruſſian dominions, which had ſo greatly diſguſted his Pruſſian Ma- " jeſty." After much debate the motion was finally rejected in a very full Houſe, by a majority of 58 voices only; the numbers being on the diviſion, 212 to 154.

Upon comparing the different parts of this account, it is obvious to remark: *Firſt*, That the plan ſaid to be originally formed by the Auſtrian Miniſtry was, in fact, and by the ſubſequent acknowledgment of the hiſtorian, tranſmitted by Count Oſtein from London to Vienna; and who in London could preſume to form, and much leſs to propoſe to the repreſentatives of foreign Princes, ſchemes of this nature, but the Miniſters themſelves, or thoſe of them who poſſeſſed the Royal confidence, by whom it was no doubt communicated to the Court of Vienna through the medium of the Auſtrian Ambaſſador. *Secondly*, It appears that Sir Robert Walpole, and the party which adhered to him in the Court and the Cabinet, were ſolicitous that the Court of Vienna ſhould accede to the propoſals of the King of Pruſſia; but the *engagements*, and no doubt the inclinations and deſigns of the Engliſh Monarch were adverſe to his wiſhes. The influence of that great ſtateſman was at this time almoſt extinguiſhed, and a romantic ſpirit of enterprize and adventure predominated. *Thirdly*, It is incontrovertible, that although an univerſal

verſal opinion was entertained of the reality of a project for partitioning the dominions of the Pruſſian Monarch, originating in the Britiſh Cabinet, and which excited very great clamour and diſcontent, yet that the Court refuſed, on two ſucceſſive and celebrated motions, to produce any papers or documents which might in anywiſe counteract a notion very open, if unfounded, to the cleareſt confutation.

But it may be proper to compare with the imperfect, inconſiſtent, and apparently reluctant information of Tindal, the account given by the King of Pruſſia himſelf, of the conduct of the Court of London at this important criſis. That Monarch is very far from countenancing the idea, that the project of partition was firſt ſuggeſted by the Court of Vienna. His words are theſe: "The greateſt enemies of the King, "as it generally happens, were his neareſt neighbours. The Kings of "England and Poland, depending upon the intrigues carried on by "Count Lynar (the Saxon Miniſter) in Ruſſia, concluded an offenſive "alliance, by which they divided between them the Pruſſian pro-"vinces. Their imaginations battened on the proſpect of their prey—"*les engraiſſoit de cette proie*—and whilſt they declaimed againſt the "ambition of a young Prince their neighbour, they already believed "themſelves in poſſeſſion of his ſpoils, hoping that Ruſſia and the "Princes of the Empire would concur in promoting their ambitious "deſigns. This was the moment which the Court of Vienna ought "to have ſeized in order to effect an accommodation with the King. "If the Dutchy of Glogau had then been ceded to him, he would have "remained content, and the Queen of Hungary might have ſecured "his aſſiſtance againſt all her other enemies. But it is very rare that "we find perſons who always diſcern the proper times for conceſſion "or ſtedfaſt reſolution*."

After the victory of Molwitz, where, to the aſtoniſhment of Europe, the veteran troops of Auſtria were defeated by the inexperienced forces of Pruſſia, the King of England ſent two Miniſters to Berlin, Lord

* Œuvres de Roi de Pruſſe, Vol. I. p. 92.

Hyndford

Hyndford in his regal, and M. Schwichelt in his Electoral capacity. The object of the latter was to ſell the neutrality of Hanover at as dear a rate as poſſible: of the former to mediate between the Courts of Vienna and Berlin, and to offer the good offices of his maſter, to engage the Queen of Hungary to cede certain diſtricts of the Lower Sileſia to obtain a peace; the dreams of conqueſt being now at an end. But the King being, as he declares, well apprized of the duplicity of the Engliſh Court, which was at this very time exerting all her influence at the Court of St. Peterſburg and elſewhere to his prejudice, determined to ſign the treaty of alliance which France propoſed to him, by M. de Belleiſle.

The Queen of Hungary at length began to ſee the danger which threatened her; and the armies of France being now on their march to the Danube, that Princeſs diſpatched Robinſon, the Engliſh Miniſter at Vienna, to the King of Pruſſia, with offers of accommodation. Robinſon aſſuming a tone of ridiculous and ill-timed arrogance, told the King, "that her Hungarian Majeſty was willing to forget all that had "paſſed, and to cede Limburg and Gueldres, with two millions of "crowns, as an equivalent for his pretenſions on Sileſia, provided he "inſtantly evacuated that Dutchy." The King diverted rather than offended at this curious offer, and equally deſpiſing the meſſage, and the meſſenger, replied, as he tells us, in terms no leſs ſtately, "that it was "for princes without honour to ſell their rights for money, and that "theſe offers were more injurious than the former contemptuous treat-"ment of the Court of Vienna." The Pruſſian Monarch immediately upon this ſigned a treaty of alliance and mutual defence with the Elector of Bavaria, then in the full career of victory; to whom, in return for Sileſia, he guaranteed, together with his vote at the approaching Diet of Election, the poſſeſſion of the Upper Auſtria, the Tyrol, the Briſgau, and the Kingdom of Bohemia. Even the King of Poland, perceiving the fine ſchemes he had concerted with the King of England utterly hopeleſs, joined the league againſt the Houſe of Auſtria.

The

The Court of Vienna now thoroughly alarmed, and preſſed on all ſides, offered, through the intervention of the Engliſh Ambaſſador, the ceſſion of a conſiderable part of Sileſia. This propoſition, ſays the King, was coldly received, and an intimation given, that what may be good at one time is not ſo at another. The affairs of the Queen becoming every day more deſperate, Lord Hyndford made on the part of her Majeſty another propoſal; to relinquiſh to him the whole of Sileſia, excepting Neiſſe, on condition of his aſſiſting her with all his forces. The King replied, that he could not violate the faith of the treaties which he had made. Even in this extremity of diſtreſs and misfortune, Vienna itſelf, expecting in helpleſs conſternation the approach of the enemy, the pride of that Court ſeemed to ſuffer little abatement. "The alliance of ſo many powers againſt the Houſe of Auſtria was regarded," ſays his Pruſſian Majeſty, "as a new war of the Titans to ſubvert the "throne of Jupiter."

At length, a private compromiſe and temporary ceſſation of hoſtilities took place, in conſequence of which the whole of Sileſia was abandoned to the Pruſſians, after a ſhow of defending the town of Neiſſe, the only fortreſs which remained unſubdued, on a verbal engagement from the King, not to take any active part in favour of the confederate powers. But with a view to excite laſting diſſention amongſt her enemies, the Court of Vienna, as the Pruſſian Monarch had previouſly expected, divulged the ſecret of this agreement. And the ſurpriſing turn, which the war had taken during the winter of 1741-2, in favour of Auſtria, revived all her former diſdain, filled her with new hopes, and made it apparent, that no permanent peace could be obtained for Pruſſia, till her Hungarian Majeſty had ſuſtained another reverſe of fortune. The war therefore recommenced with redoubled fury; but the battle of Czaſlau, fought in the month of May 1742, once more awaked the apprehenſions and reſtored the pacific views of the Court of Vienna. And the Earl of Hyndford being now veſted with full powers, the treaty of Breſlau was ſigned in June following, under the the mediation of the King of England.

By the terms of this celebrated treaty, both the Upper and Lower Silesia, the principality of Teschen excepted, were, together with the County of Glatz, yielded to Prussia in full sovereignty—the King of Prussia renouncing all pretensions upon the remaining territories of the Queen of Hungary, and charging himself with the payment of the loan advanced by the English merchants in 1735, upon the credit of the Silesian revenues. Such were the easy conditions upon which an acquisition was made, which laid the foundation of the present greatness of Prussia. The cessions comprized in this treaty so far exceeded the most sanguine hopes originally entertained by the Prussian Monarch, as to cause him to speak of it publickly in terms of the highest exultation, declaring himself willing to part with his right hand to ensure the perpetual and faithful observance of it.

The King of Prussia does by no means ascribe the merit of this transaction to the exclusive influence of his own talents. "Circumstances," says he, "seconded this enterprize throughout. In order "to render it successful, it was necessary that France should have "taken the part she did in the war against Austria; that Russia should "have been attacked by Sweden; that the Hanoverians and Saxons "should have been restrained by timidity from timely and vigorous "action; and that the King of England, the enemy of Prussia, should "have become, in his own dispute, the instrument of their aggran-"dizement. If this great undertaking had failed, the King would "have been censured as an inconsiderate Prince, who had at-"tempted an enterprize beyond his strength. Success established his "reputation."

Upon the whole, it is evident to demonstration, that from an eager and ambitious desire to make acquisitions at the expence of Prussia, to be added to the Electorate of Hanover, the Court of London did not exert her powerful influence with the Queen of Hungary to accept of the first moderate propofals of the King of Prussia, by which the peace of Europe would probably have been preserved; nay, that the Court of Vienna was encouraged by the King of England to

reject them with diſdain, and in this inſtance, as well as in many others, there appeared reaſon amply ſufficient to excite the deepeſt regret at the abſurd and unnatural connection ſubſiſting between the Kingdom of Great Britain, and that inſignificant German Dutchy. But what avails this elaborate deduction of facts? All can ſee the folly of the follies that are paſt; while the more gigantic ones of the time preſent, as by ſome ſtrange enchantment, elude the obſervation, and vaniſh entirely from the view!

ON

THE CHARACTER AND CONDUCT

OF

LOUIS XVI. KING OF FRANCE,

SUBSEQUENT TO THE REVOLUTION,

A. D. 1789.

THE ſincerity of the late King of France, and the reality of his attachment to the conſtitution, eſtabliſhed A. D. 1791, have been frequent and ſerious topics of diſcuſſion in this country, and there are many perſons ſo immoderately indulgent, or ſo imperfectly informed, as to imagine, that this unfortunate Monarch was chargeable with no violation of good faith and integrity during the laſt eventful years of his life. But if it appear on a diſpaſſionate and impartial inveſtigation of facts, that the diſſimulation of the King was uniform and ſyſtematic, from the period of his aſſembling the Eſtates General, to the day of his dethronement, the French Nation will be reſcued from a part, at leaſt, of that intolerable load of reproach, under which, from a variety of cauſes, but chiefly from the practical abandonment of their ſpeculative principles, they at preſent unavoidably ſuffer. Truth is ſacred, and we have no right to be unjuſt, even to thoſe who are charged or chargeable with acts of the moſt atrocious injuſtice to others. There is ſurely no neceſſity to heighten the deep and *ſombre* tints of the picture.

Although

Although every art and every effort had been tried on the part of the Court to prevent the meeting of the Eſtates General, the King of France, in his opening ſpeech (May 5, 1789) aſſumed the merit of convening that aſſembly from the pureſt motives of patriotiſm and goodwill; and he congratulated them "on the arrival of the day which he "had long panted to ſee." But M. Bertrand de Moleville, who filled for ſome months, during the years 1791 and 1792, the office of Miniſter of Marine, and was known to be in the higheſt confidence of the King, ſpeaks in his Memoirs a language widely different. "Becauſe," ſays he, "the States General produced the moſt execrable revolution that "ever exiſted, is it Louis we ought to accuſe? No one is ignorant that "it was not in his power to refuſe aſſembling the States General. He "was forced to it, not only by the univerſal cry of the Kingdom, but by "the deplorable imprudence of the Parliaments in declaring, that they "did not repreſent the Nation; and that they would no longer uſurp "a right which conſcience and honour compelled them to relinquiſh." The raſh and violent proceedings of the Archbiſhop of Toulouſe had been attended with conſequences which ſtruck the Court with conſternation, and in adopting the conciliatory line of conduct recommended by M. Necker, the Monarch was influenced by no other motive than fear. But his underſtanding was too circumſcribed to allow him long to follow any conſiſtent and uniform ſyſtem of action. After the actual convention of the Eſtates, he evidently wavered between oppoſite counſels.

The famous Royal Declaration of the 23d June (1789) was originally drawn by M. Necker, but alterations ſo material were ſubſequently engrafted upon it by the ſecret adviſers of the Crown, that he no longer acknowledged it as his; refuſing even to attend the King on this occaſion to the Aſſembly. 1. The declaration, in its original ſtate, did not pretend to annul the reſolution by which the *Tiers Etat* announced itſelf to be the NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, but on the contrary it authorized the Aſſembly during the preſent ſeſſion to vote individually. II. The plan of M. Necker contained an article which declared, that the citizens of every claſs ſhould be admitted equally

to

to all offices, without any other diſtinction than that of abilities and virtues; a conceſſion which at once overthrew all the ancient and odious ariſtocratic privileges. III. By an article of M. Necker's plan, the aſſembly voting individually, was empowered to regulate the organization of all future aſſemblies of the Eſtates General; the ſpirit of the declaration therefore in its original ſtate was entirely in favour of the *Tiers Etat*, who would have been highly gratified at this critical moment by ſuch gracious and open manifeſtations of the Royal countetenance and protection. And the ſpecific propoſitions of the King, conſiſting of thirty-five articles, as they came from the hands of M. Necker, might eaſily have been modified and reduced to a regular ſyſtem. But the haughty and peremptory manner in which the *Tiers Etat* were recommended to reſcind the deciſive ſtep they had juſt taken totally counteracted every good effect the declaration was otherwiſe calculated to produce.

The King even ventured to throw out an indirect menace of diſſolving the Aſſembly in caſe of diſobedience. "Vous venez, Meſſieurs," ſaid he, "d'entendre le reſultat de mes diſpoſitions, & de mes vues. "Elles ſont conformes au vif deſir que j'ai d'operer le bien public; et "ſi par une fatalité loin de ma penſée vous m'abandonniez dans une "ſi belle enterprize, *Seul* je ferai le bien ce mes peuples: *Seul*, je me "conſidérai comme leur véritable répréſentant; et connoiſſant vos "cahiers, connoiſſant l'accord parfait qui exiſte entre le vœu le plus "géneral de la Nation, et mes intentions bienfaiſantes, j'aurai toute la "confiance qui doit inſpirer une ſi rare harmonie, et je marcherai vers "le but auquel, je veux attendre avec tout le courage, et la fermeté, "qu'il doit m'inſpirer."

Such language as this was calculated to produce the higheſt degree of irritation, and the authority of the Crown at this period was utterly unequal to the execution of theſe lofty ideas. Arrogant and boaſtful words, unaccompanied by the reality of power, will inevitably excite at the ſame time reſentment and contempt. M. Necker was certainly by

by no means a man of firſt-rate talents; but it is no more than juſtice to ſay, that the failure of his projects aroſe not from any inherent abſurdity in their nature, but from the ſecret and powerful oppoſition made to them by perſons poſſeſſing the ſubſtance of that confidence of which he had only the name and the ſhadow. But when he found himſelf unable to carry thoſe meaſures, of which he diſcerned the wiſdom and the rectitude, into effect, he ought doubtleſs inſtantly to have reſigned his office. To remain for a moment in a place, lending his ſanction to meaſures which he was no longer allowed to guide, muſt ever be regarded as demonſtrative evidence of a mind devoid of that reſolution and energy which his ſituation demanded.

The character of that unfortunate but well-intentioned Miniſter is thus drawn by M. Bertrand de Moleville, with a pen dipped in gall. "I knew him well enough to be firmly perſuaded, that he never deſigned the ill he has done, or that he had the leaſt notion that his meaſures would produce it. I only blame his vanity, and his extravagant preſumption. He ſo completely in his conſcience believed himſelf to be the ableſt Miniſter that ever exiſted, that he would have been mortified to have only been compared with Sully and Colbert. He did not heſitate to believe, that he combined in a ſuperior degree all the great qualities of the greateſt Miniſters, without any of their faults. Poſterity will ſee in him a man, ſelfiſh, ambitious, and vain: fooliſhly intoxicated with the merit which he fancied himſelf to poſſeſs, and jealous of that of others; deſirous of exceſs of honour and of power; virtuous in words, and through oſtentation, more than in reality. In a word, he was a preſumptuous empiric in politics and morals." The colleague of M. Necker, M. de Montmorin, is declared by M. Bertrand, "to have been neither Conſtitutionaliſt, nor Democrat, but a real Royaliſt.—I muſt," ſays he, "at the ſame time acknowledge, that the extreme weakneſs of his character prevented him from being uſeful to his Majeſty in circumſtances that required much energy." This is equivalent to an aſſertion, unfortunately too well ſupported by collateral

lateral and independent evidence of the political hypocriſy of M. de Montmorin, during the whole term of his adminiſtration, even when he ſeemed moſt friendly to the eſtabliſhment of a free Conſtitution.

Louis XVI. of whom M. Bertrand ſpeaks in terms of high-flown panegyric, appears, nevertheleſs, throughout theſe memoirs, in a light by no means advantageous. Weak, diſtruſtful, ſuperſtitious, inconſtant, ſtrongly affected by minute circumſtances, inceſſantly, and idly buſy in the purſuit of petty, and at the ſame time often pernicious objects. Mild, humane, and indulgent by nature, but jealous to the laſt degree of any diminution of power; and when occaſionally forced to conceſſions, artfully and oſtentatiouſly repreſenting them as the effect of his own royal and ſpontaneous beneficence; perpetually hearkening to, and in part following, the counſels of ſome raſh and deſperate men, falſely calling themſelves "the King's friends," whom, in defiance of the public opinion, and of the common dictates of prudence, he retained near his perſon, and of whom M. Bertrand was the chief.

On the capture of the Baſtile, on the memorable 14th July, 1789, the King profeſſed, and moſt unfortunately for himſelf, only profeſſed, to change the whole courſe of his policy. "When the Baron "de Breteuil," ſays M. Bertrand, "left Verſailles at the period of M. "Necker's recal, he was inveſted with the power of treating with "foreign Courts, and of propoſing ANY meaſure in the King's name, "which, in his opinion, tended to promote the re-eſtabliſhment of the "Royal authority."

For two years this Nobleman appears to have poſſeſſed the higheſt place in the Royal confidence; and during this period political intrigues were inceſſantly carried on by the French Court, and a clandeſtine and dangerous correſpondence maintained with that of Vienna. This was well known by thoſe, who were moſt intereſted in counteracting them. The plaineſt truths were ſpoken in the plaineſt language; but to thoſe who had ears, and would hear not, ſpoken, alas! in vain.

While the inſidious project for the viſit to St. Cloud was in contemplation, the following ſpirited expoſtulatory addreſs to the King, appeared in the periodical publication, ſtiled " L' Orateur du Peuple." " Louis XVI. aujourd'hui encore Roi des Francais arrête ! Ou " cours-tu Monarque, abuſé par des conſeils perfides ? As-tu bien " peſé les ſuites de ce départ, l'ouvrage de ta femme ? Le peuple " ignore-t-il que de St. Cloud tu te diſpoſes à partir pour Compeigne, " et de-là pour la frontière ? Ne ſavons-nous pas que la bouche des " rois fut toujours l'antre du menſonge ? Une furie te pouſſe dans le " precipice ! Eh bien, ſi tu pars nous ne voyons plus en toi que " Tarquin chaſſé de Rome."

Had the King of France been a man capable of philoſophic reflection, the axiom of the Roman hiſtorian might probably have occurred with ſufficient force, to have reſtrained his ſubſequent acts of delirium." " Regum majeſtatem difficilius ab ſummo faſtigio, ad medium detrahi, " quam a mediis ad ima præcipitari."*

The moſt direct and deciſive evidence of the deceitful conduct of the King, is, however, furniſhed by M. Bertrand himſelf, who acknowledges, that in May 1791, M. Le Compte Alphonſe D'Urfort, was diſpatched on a ſecret commiſſion from their Moſt Chriſtian Majeſties to the Emperor, then at Mantua ; and in a ſhort time he returned with a declaration, ſigned by his Imperial Majeſty, containing the outlines of a plan for effecting a counter-revolution, concerted between the Courts of Vienna, Madrid, Turin, and Naples ; conformably to which, France was to be invaded by the combined forces of theſe confederate powers, amounting to 100,000 men, at the end of July ; and their Moſt Chriſtian Majeſties are earneſtly exhorted " to employ " every poſſible means to increaſe their popularity, in order to take " advantage of it, when the time ſhould come ; and ſo that the people, " alarmed at the approach of the foreign armies, ſhould find their " ſafety only in the King's mediation, and their ſubmiſſion to his

* Livy.

Majeſty's

" Majeſty's authority. His Imperial Majeſty intreats their Moſt " Chriſtian Majeſties to drop every idea of procuring their liberty; " and adds, that their ſureſt dependence is on the movement of the " armies of the allied powers, preceded by menacing manifeſtoes."*

Unfortunately the King and Queen, deaf to every ſuggeſtion of policy and prudence, from whatever quarter originating, adopted meaſures equally fatal to themſelves and to the kingdom.

By the advice of the Baron de Breteuil, an attempt was made by their Majeſties, notwithſtanding the diſſuaſives of the Emperor, to effect their eſcape to Montmedi; a project no leſs abſurd in the deſign, than unſucceſsful in the execution, and miſchievous in the conſequences. Senſible by dear-bought experience, of the falſe ſtep he had taken, the King withdrew his confidence from the Baron, but unhappily without transferring his favour to thoſe who were more deſerving of it. From this fatal æra, the Republican party became every day more daring and formidable. The King having declared in the paper which he left behind him, all his oaths and promiſes null and void, it was not poſſible, in the nature of things, that confidence, untainted by ſuſpicion, ſhould ever again be reſtored. Sentiments of loyalty and generoſity, however, upon the whole prevailed; the apology of the King was received by the Aſſembly with indulgence, and even complacency; and in a ſhort time, powers were veſted in the hands of the Monarch, infinitely dangerous both to himſelf and to the nation.

The Adminiſtration which preſided over the affairs of France, from the period of the King's acceptance of the Conſtitution in the autumn of 1791, to March 1792, was compoſed of perſons preſumed, *with one exception*, to be well affected to the Conſtitution, but apparently devoid of the zeal and vigour neceſſary to counteract the deſigns of

* Vide alſo Dr. Moore'e account of this tranſaction in his valuable Hiſtory of the Cauſes and Progreſs of the French Revolution.

the Court. During this term, M. de Montmorin, and afterwards M. de Leſſart, were at the head of the Foreign Department, and M. Cayer de Gerville, of the Interior; M. de Narbonne was Miniſter of War, and M. Bertrand de Moleville, of Marine; M. Tarbé, of Finance, and M. Duport du Tertre, of Juſtice. But of theſe Miniſters M. Bertrand, an open and determined enemy of the Conſtitution, enjoyed incomparably the moſt credit with the King. A repreſentation from the Aſſembly againſt him was treated with contempt, while M. Narbonne, who had refuſed any longer to ſit in Council with M. Bertrand, was diſmiſſed with diſgrace. Both M. de Montmorin and M. de Leſſart were, according to the repreſentation of M. Bertrand, concealed Royaliſts, and abſolutely hoſtile to the new order of things. The other three Miniſters were men of probity and conſtitutional principles, who harboured with extreme reluctance any ſuſpicions of the King. M. Gerville in particular was convinced, upon very falſe ground as it now appears, of the rectitude of the King's intentions; but the Queen he regarded, M. Bertrand tells us, "as a haughty, perfidious, and wicked woman, who thought of "nothing but re-eſtabliſhing deſpotiſm; and his idea of her Majeſty "was ſuch, that when the Miniſterial Committee was held in the "Palace, he never would ſpeak with freedom, from a notion that the "Queen, or ſome of her ſpies, liſtened at the door, or behind the "wainſcot."

But even thoſe who were willing and deſirous to believe, that the King did not entertain any fixed or regularly-formed deſign of ſubverting the Conſtitution, could not but acknowledge, that he obſtinately withheld his ſupport and confidence from thoſe who were moſt zealouſly attached to it. Inſtead of cultivating a good underſtanding with the Aſſembly, by an open and ſteady courſe of action, he had recourſe to the vile arts of corruption and bribery, to leſſen the weight of the oppoſition againſt the Court; and vaſt ſums were expended to no other purpoſe, than to make the Government contemptible and odious. "During the firſt Aſſembly," ſaid the King to M. Bertrand, "the

" the attempt to gain the Tribunes coſt the Civil Liſt more than " three millions; and the Tribunes were conſtantly againſt me not- " withſtanding."

In the ſpring of the year 1792, the public diſcontents ran ſo high, that the King was *compelled* to make an entire change of Adminiſtration, and to replace his former Miniſters with another ſet of men, upon whoſe zeal, vigour, and ability, the nation relied with perfect ſecurity. The new, or Jacobin Miniſtry, as it was invidiouſly and moſt improperly ſtiled,* conſiſted of M. Dumourier for the Foreign, and M. Roland the Interior Department; M. Servan, Miniſter of War, and M. de la Coſté, of Marine; M. Clavieres, of Finance, and M. Duranton, Garde des Sceaux, or Miniſter of Juſtice—men whoſe counſels might, if the infatuation of the Monarch had permitted, ſtill have availed to ſave the King and Country from ruin.

In the month of April the fatal war, which has for ſo many years deſolated Europe, commenced after an atrocious ſeries of provocations on the part of Auſtria, and a long and unexampled forbearance on that of France; ſo that upon which of the two nations the heavy charge of aggreſſion reſted, was abundantly manifeſt to every impartial and diſpaſſionate perſon.

When the combined armies were on the point of invading France, M. Bertrand, as he himſelf informs us, counſelled the King to ſend off M. Mallet du Pan with ſecret diſpatches for the Baron de Breteuil, and directions how to act. This the King, with marks of emotion, refuſed, ſaying, " It was he that prompted us to take that accurſed " journey to Varennes." In the ſtead of M. Breteuil, therefore,

* " Neither La-Coſté or Duranton were ever Members of the Jacobin Society. " Dumourier, Roland, and Clavieres, were three very ſtudious and laborious men, " who lived at home, aſſiſted but very ſeldom at the debates of this Club previouſly " to their entrance into the Adminiſtration, never afterwards, and who conſidered it " as a dangerous Aſſembly, which it was neceſſary either to ſuppreſs or lull aſleep."

MEMOIRS OF DUMOURIER.

the

the letters were addreſſed to the Marechal de Caſtries, adviſing that the entrance of the Auſtrians and Pruſſians into France ſhould be preceded by a Manifeſto, in which they ſhould declare, "that forced to "take arms againſt an unjuſt attack, they did not impute that ag- "greſſion either to the King, or to the French nation, but to a criminal "faction which oppreſſed both. Conſequently, far from departing from "the ſentiments of amity which united them to France, that their "intention, on the contrary, was to deliver that nation from tyranny, "and to reſtore it to legal order and tranquillity. That their Ma- "jeſties, the Emperor and King, took all peaceable and faithful "ſubjects under their protection; that they conſidered as their "enemies thoſe only, who were the enemies of France, namely, the "faction of the Jacobins and all its adherents." This advice, as appears by referring to the proclamation of the Duke of Brunſwick, was ſtrictly conformed to; and from M. Bertrand we learn, that the King of France entertained the firmeſt aſſurance of the ſucceſs of the Duke of Brunſwick's expedition, though his perſonal ſituation filled him with alarming apprehenſions.

But excluſive of the irrefragable evidence recently produced, in conſequence of the publications of Dumourier, De Bouillé, Bertrand de Moleville, Madame Roland, &c. the treachery of the King might, at the period when the Auſtrian and Pruſſian armies entered France, be without heſitation inferred from the general tenor of his conduct, ſince the period of his acceptance of the Conſtitution; from his ſyſtematic abuſe of the VETO; from the defenceleſs ſtate of the kingdom, and more eſpecially of the principal fortreſſes on the German frontier; from the recal of Marechal Luckner, and the myſterious military movements of M. Fayette, now in cloſe and intimate union with the Court. M. Dumourier himſelf informs us, that he learned on his arrival at Douay, July 1792, that Marechal Luckner, after having held a council of war, though there was no enemy to oppoſe him, had evacuated Courtray and Menin, and was returning to the camp of Valenciennes. "This ſhameful retreat," ſays he, "evidently "proceeded from party ſpirit, in conſequence of ſome great project "broached

" broached by La Fayette's faction, of which Luckner, beſet by his " own ſtaff-officers, was at once the inſtrument and the dupe."

It did not eſcape the obſervation of the military men in the Aſſembly, that M. Fayette had drawn back his army from Longwy to Sedan, on the approach of the Duke of Brunſwick's forces; whereas he ought, as they affirmed, to have retired towards Verdun, and, croſſing the Meuſe, have occupied the camp of Sivry-la-Perche, a very ſtrong poſition, ſecuring a ſafe retreat to the Gorge of Clermont; inſtead of which, by turning aſide to Sedan, he left the route open to Paris.*

From the general complexion of M. Fayette's conduct and character, it cannot indeed be ſuppoſed, that his views extended further than to ſupport the Conſtitutional Monarchy, in oppoſition to the riſing ſpirit of Jacobiniſm and Republicaniſm; and ſo egregiouſly was he impoſed upon by the artifices of the Court, as to entertain the extravagant belief, that the invaders of France were actuated by the ſame moderate and patriotic motives. But ſubſequent events have no doubt fully convinced that reſpectable but miſtaken man, that if the dark deſigns, at this time in agitation, had ultimately proved ſucceſsful, he would have fallen the firſt victim of his own credulity and folly.

For a ſhort time after the appointment of the patriotic Miniſters, Roland, Clavieres, and Servan, as Madame Roland informs us, they were almoſt perſuaded of the ſincerity of the Monarch, who appeared ſo anxious to inſpire them with confidence, that Roland declared, " If " the King was not an honeſt man, he was the moſt arrant cheat in " the kingdom ;" adding, " diſſimulation can hardly go ſo far." But they were ſoon convinced that they were in a fatal error. At times, indeed, they thought that the King appeared impreſſed with the force of their reaſonings; but at the ſubſequent meeting of council, he was

* Vide Major Money's Memoirs of the Campaign, A. D. 1792.

hardened

hardened into reſiſtance; and the ſame round of argument was urged with ceaſeleſs and unavailing ſolicitude. Servan had the boldneſs to declare to the King, "that his weakneſs was criminal, and would "never be a ſhield againſt the indignation of the people." No regiſter of the tranſactions, and deliberations of the council was permitted by the King, nor any ſecretary allowed, although expreſsly enjoined by the Conſtitution, and repeatedly inſiſted upon by the Miniſters. "Want of ability," ſays Madame Roland, "had diſabled "him from preventing the eſtabliſhment of the new government; but "honeſty alone would have been ſufficient to have ſaved him, if he "had been ſincere in executing, when he had accepted the conſtitu-"tion. Unhappily for himſelf, with one hand to ſupport what he was "overthrowing with the other, was his crooked policy; and this per-"fidious conduct firſt excited miſtruſt, and finiſhed by kindling general "indignation."

After the diſmiſſion of this honeſt, wiſe, and popular Adminiſtration, the Monarch appears to have been guided by no fixed principle of action. The reſolution ſuddenly taken to diſcard the late Miniſters, proceeded not from any concerted plan of policy, but from the mere impulſe of pride and paſſion. He could not endure the language of ſincerity and truth. Even yet he was the arbiter of his own fate. M. Bertrand himſelf admits, that at this period the faction of the Gironde, though undoubtedly Republican in ſpeculation, harbored no deſign of ſubverting the Conſtitution; and a letter was at this critical and deciſive moment tranſmitted to the King, ſigned by Vergniaud, Guadet, and Genſonné, three chiefs of the party, ſtating the terrible conſequences likely to enſue; and pledging themſelves for the ſecurity of the public peace, in the event of the reſtoration of the Gironde Adminiſtration. To this letter the King, bent on his own ruin, diſdained to reply. Equally devoid of energy and of judgment, he waited with impatience for the approaching time, when by the intervention of a foreign and military force, that new order of things, which he had repeatedly and ſolemnly ſworn to defend, ſhould be completely overturned. The edifice of the Conſtitution was indeed deſtroyed, but the

Monarch

Monarch was at the ſame time, as might eaſily be foreſeen, cruſhed under its ruins.

To affirm that the oaths of the King of France were of no validity, as being the effect of coercion, muſt tend to diſſolve all moral obligation. The King of France was no otherwiſe under coercion at Paris, when he ſwore to maintain the Conſtitution of 1791, than the King of England in ſubmitting to the oath tendered to him on his coronation at Weſtminſter, in 1761. He could not be King if he refuſed it: and the violation of it at the ſame inſtant diſſolved and nullified the bond of allegiance. In neither country was the Monarch ſubject to perſonal reſponſibility in the regular courſe of Government; but if the functions of ſovereignty were perverted to a purpoſe directly contrary to that which the Conſtitution intended; if inſtead of protecting, a deſign was evidently formed for ſubverting the Conſtitution, the Monarch could not in equity claim the benefit of thoſe eſtabliſhed rules and maxims of government in his own favor, which might operate to the detriment, or perhaps the ruin of thoſe, for whoſe ſake all government is inſtituted.

Excluſive, however, of the ſanction of oaths, the King of France made repeated and ſpontaneous proteſtations of attachment to the Conſtitution; and on one ſolemn and memorable occaſion, to the Aſſembly in perſon, February 1790, by a declaration equally unſolicited and unexpected. "Let us," ſaid the Monarch, in a ſtrain of the moſt inſidious hypocriſy, "give ourſelves up with good faith to "the hopes that we ought to conceive. Continue your labours. Let "it be known that your Monarch applauds them. I ſhould have "many loſſes to recount, but I find my happineſs in that of the "nation. From the bottom of my heart do I expreſs this ſentiment. "I will maintain the Conſtitution with my whole power. May "this day, in which your Monarch comes to re-unite himſelf to "you, effect in like manner, the re-union of all." "How," exclaims M. de Bouillé, a man diſtinguiſhed amongſt the Royaliſts for honour and capacity, "could he retract ſuch a ſtep, thus voluntarily taken,

" without that degradation of character, than which a King can incur " no greater misfortune."

And when after the abortive and juſtly ſuſpected attempt to withdraw from Paris to St. Cloud, the King appeared for a time to adopt a new ſyſtem, and had been prevailed upon to announce the new Conſtitution in form to the different Courts of Europe, he was congratulated by the Preſident of the Aſſembly, for having thus impoſed ſilence on detractors, he declared himſelf " charmed beyond expreſſion, " at the warmth of eſteem which the National Aſſembly had been " pleaſed to expreſs towards him.—If they could but read my heart," ſaid he, " they would there ſee ſentiments engraved on it, that " would well juſtify the confidence of the nation.—All diſtruſt would " then be baniſhed from our boſoms, and we ſhould all be happy." Is there not ſome ground of excuſe for the ſtrong expreſſion, that " the " mouth of royalty is the cave of falſehood," when in leſs than two ſhort months, the King, abandoning his honor and his duty, and putting his crown upon the hazard of a die, ventured by an inſtrument under his own hand and ſeal, to pronounce all his former declarations null and void, as extorted from him in direct oppoſition to his real ſentiments !

All the feelings and ſympathies of our nature are nevertheleſs awakened, when Louis XVI. a Monarch poſſeſſing undoubtedly many virtues, ſuch indeed as were chiefly calculated to bloſſom in the ſhade, preſents himſelf to our imagination as a priſoner at the bar, and much more as a criminal on the ſcaffold. But the French nation themſelves, through the medium of their repreſentatives, were the proper and only competent judges, how far the ſafety of the country demanded, by an imperious and terrible neceſſity, ſo ſignal and melancholy a ſacrifice. And however we may diſſolve in tears of compaſſion over the victim, we can have no right to brand it as an act of national injuſtice. That there were men in that Aſſembly which paſſed ſentence of condemnation on the King, of the moſt flagitious and unprincipled ambition, who under pretext of patriotiſm, ſought only for occaſions

to

to carry into effect their own black and nefarious deſigns, can in no degree invalidate the truth of the facts here ſtated, or of the concluſions deducible from them. There were others who were as certainly actuated by an high ſenſe of duty, who ſealed his doom with a bleeding heart; and who would with pleaſure have devoted their lives for their Sovereign, had they conſidered him as the protector and guardian of the Conſtitution which he had ſworn to defend, inſtead of a traitor and a hypocrite, juſtly accuſed of conſpiring its deſtruction.

The laſt eventful years of the reign of this unfortunate Monarch, brought his character into full and perfect view. It was conſpicuouſly marked by imbecility and duplicity—by inconſtancy, with ſtrange alternations of obſtinacy—by temerity ſuddenly ſubſiding into fear—by a perpetual diſtruſt of his own judgment, and a tranſient and limited confidence in that of others. So ſtrongly was the idea impreſſed upon the public mind of the want of genius, and even of common underſtanding in the King, that a general emotion of ſurprize was created by the calmneſs and propriety of the anſwers given by him to the interrogatories of the Convention, during his trial; and they have been unavailingly urged as proofs of capacity, which the whole tenor of his conduct demonſtrates that he did not poſſeſs. Good-nature bordering upon weakneſs; humanity allied to indolence; piety tinctured with ſuperſtition; and a deſire feeble and inefficient to diffuſe happineſs, were the virtues which muſt be oppoſed to his moral and mental defects; and had not the unexampled malignity of his deſtiny forbidden, they would have unqueſtionably ſufficed to have carried him through life with the reputation of a beneficent and virtuous Monarch. His laſt moments were ennobled by the calmneſs of reſignation, and an unaffected diſplay of firmneſs and fortitude. We are told of him, that he was highly offended at the freedom with which the famous work of the Abbé Raynal was written. The Republic of Geneva was ſolicited to prohibit the publication; the Parliament of Paris received an injunction to fulminate their judicial, and the Sorbonne their theological cenſures againſt it. Raynal's work, nevertheleſs, ſtill

exiſts, to inform and enlighten the world; but the Genevan Republic, the Parliament, the Sorbonne, and Louis XVI. are no more!

How incalculable would have been the difference in favour of the ſacred and eternal intereſts of liberty and happineſs, had England accepted with magnanimous ſincerity, the overtures of amity made by France, through the medium of her patriot Miniſters, in the ſpring of 1792; and had frankly and generouſly offered her guarantee of the Conſtitution, as ratified by the King. Saturnian times might then have rolled round again. But ſuch wiſdom, perhaps, in ſuch circumſtances, is not given to man—certainly not to ſuch men as then ruled, and who ſtill, to the inexpreſſible misfortune of mankind, continue to rule the counſels of this once free and flouriſhing, but now degraded and devoted country.

Amongſt the days which have been ſolemnly ſet apart by the State, to weary Heaven with petitions for ſucceſs in a war which has deſolated and deſtroyed the fineſt countries of Europe, how congenial would it be with the ſpirit of philoſophic and Chriſtian benevolence, to intermingle one earneſt and devout wiſh for its termination—

> Imploring Him who bids the tempeſt ceaſe,
> To wrap the infuriate world in laſting peace;
> Nor ſuffer ſtateſmen, rancorous, bold, and blind,
> For prieſts, or peers, or kings, to ſacrifice mankind.
>
> WODHULL.

EXTRACTS

EXTRACTS

FROM

A HISTORY OF INDIA,

BY

SEID GHOLAM HOSSEIN KHAN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL PERSIAN.

PRINTED AT CALCUTTA, A. D. 1789.

IT has often been the ſubject of boaſt on the part of thoſe who applaud the juſtice and the rectitude of Mr. Haſtings's adminiſtration in India, that no complaints of oppreſſion have been tranſmitted from thence to England. But it is obvious to aſk, what claſs of natives, however exalted in rank or dignity, after the terrible cataſtrophe of Rajah Nundecomar, could in reaſon be expected to venture the conſequences of ſtanding forward as the public accuſers of Mr. Haſtings? To whom were they to apply for redreſs? Who would undertake to plead their cauſe? In what Court would it be adviſeable for them to inſtitute their ſuit? Have we not invaded the territories of an unoffending people, and broken down the barriers which Nature herſelf ſeems to have erected as limits to our ambition, and as leſſons to our avarice? We cannot, indeed, hear the execrations which we may have provoked, for oceans divide us from them. We cannot hear the cries of the nations that have been ſubjected to the dominion of our rapacity and oppreſſion. The natives of India do not repreſent their wrongs by Ambaſſadors. But we may read them

in

in the very nature of man, and in thoſe feelings which teach him to revolt at tyranny and uſurpation in every climate and quarter of the globe.

Great ſtreſs alſo has been laid on the flattering circumſtance, that the evidence of the Engliſh, who have returned in ſucceſſion from India, has been almoſt uniformly favourable to Mr. Haſtings. But then it is neceſſary to recollect, that the Engliſh, reſident in India, live there without ſympathy with the natives. "They have," to adopt the energetic language of a celebrated writer,* "no more "ſocial habits with the people, than if they ſtill reſided in England, "nor indeed any ſpecies of intercourſe, but that which is neceſſary "to the making a ſudden fortune, with a view to a remote ſettlement. "Animated with all the avarice of age, and all the impetuoſity of "youth, they roll in one after another, wave after wave, and there is "nothing before the eyes of the natives but an endleſs, hopeleſs "proſpect of new flights of birds of prey and paſſage, with appetites "continually renewing for a food that is continually waſting."

The Hiſtory of Gholam Hoſſein Khan, a perſon of great diſtinction in the Court of Moorſhedabad, which principally relates to the tranſactions which took place in Bengal, and the adjoining provinces, ſubſequent to the death of Ali Verdi Khan, contains many ſtriking proofs of the intelligence and humanity of the author, who, conſidering the nature of his ſituation, ſpeaks in terms of boldneſs and indignation little to be expected, of the direful effects reſulting from the Engliſh ſyſtem of government; and the opinions of thoſe who regard the adminiſtration of affairs in India for the laſt forty years, as founded in the moſt profligate political depravity, will receive a ſignal confirmation from the narrative of this good and virtuous Muſſulman.

VOL. I. 4to.

Of the character and government of the Nabob Coſſim Ali Khan, this Hiſtorian expreſſes himſelf in the following manner:

* Burke's Speech on the India Bill of 1783.

"Although

" Although the perpetual infidelities of the troops, as well as of the Commanders and Grandees of Bengal, had rendered him exceedingly ſuſpicious, and ever prone to confiſcations of property, confinement of perſons, and effuſion of blood, he had admirable qualities that balanced his bad ones. In unravelling the intricacies of affairs of government, and eſpecially the knotty myſteries of finance; in examining and determining private differences, in eſtabliſhing regular payments for his troops and his houſehold; in honouring and rewarding men of merit and men of learning; in conducting his expenditure exactly between the extremes of parſimony and prodigality; and in knowing intuitively where he muſt ſpend freely, and where with moderation; in all theſe qualifications he was an incomparable man indeed, and the moſt extraordinary prince of his age; nor was any man daring enough in his Court to touch a bribe, or to ſpeak in behalf of an unjuſt pretenſion.

" At this period nothing was more common than to ſee Engliſh agents of all colours and denominations (and they ſwarmed in every part of Bengal) take up the farm of a town, mart, village, or diſtrict, hoiſt up the Engliſh flag on it of their own private authority, pay to the Nawaub ſuch a rent as they choſe to part with, keep the reſt to themſelves, and act meanwhile as the moſt relentleſs, rapacious tyrants, ſetting at defiance the Nawaub's authority every where and in every inſtance."

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" It was noon-day when the Nawaub Coſſim Ali Khan received intelligence of the Engliſh having ſeized the City of Azem-abad. In the middle of the night another letter came, that mentioned how the Governor had recovered the City, with a great ſlaughter of the Engliſh. As ſoon as it was day-break, every one made haſte to offer their congratulations. At the end of the public audience, the Nawaub wrote circular letters throughout his dominions, by which he informed his officers of this event, and gave them notice of the rupture between

between him and the Engliſh, as well as of the proofs they had furniſhed of their hatred and enmity to him; commanding them at the ſame time to put thoſe perfides to the ſword wherever they ſhould find them. It is uncertain whether he may have comprized in this order M. Amyatt himſelf, with all thoſe of his retinue; or whether thoſe that killed that ill-fated man, availed themſelves of the general order which had reached Moorſhedabad."

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"Governor Vanſittart would not permit Meer Jaffier to carry out of Calcutta, Nundecomar, a man of an intriguing ſpirit, who bore the higheſt ſway upon his mind. On his being returned to Moorſhedabad, he worked himſelf into ſo much authority, that he undertook to demoliſh no leſs a man than Mahomed Reza Khan. In compliance with his will the Nawaub diſmiſſed that Nobleman from his office, and moreover had him brought priſoner to Moorſhedabad. Luckily for him, that Meer Jaffier fell ſick at this very time, and became worſe and worſe. At laſt on the 14th of Shaaban, in the year 1178 of the Hegira, he departed this life, and paſſed over the ſtream which divides the confines of this fragile world from the regions of eternity. Some moments before his demiſe he had, as affirmed, on Nundecomar's perſuaſion, ordered to be brought to him ſome water that had been poured in libation over the idol at Kyruf-conah, a famous temple of the Gentoos, in the neighbourhood of Moorſhedabad, and that ſome drops of it were poured down the dying man's throat, this being the laſt water which he taſted. Preſerve us, oh God! as well as all believers, from ſuch a ſickneſs and ſuch a death. Lord Clive diſmiſſed Nundecomar from his office, with an injunction not to leave Calcutta."

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"After theſe arrangements, Lord Clive journeyed to Illahabad, where he had the honour to pay his reſpects to the Emperor, after which he viſited the Vizier, and having exchanged with him ſome ſumptuous

ſumptuous entertainments, and ſeveral curious and magnificent preſents, he explained the project he had in his mind, and aſked that the Company ſhould be inveſted with the Dewannee of the three provinces of Bengal, Bahar, and Oriſſa, of which office he requeſted the proper patents from the Vizier and the Emperor. As both the Emperor and the Vizier were already in their minds ſubdued by the ſuperior courage and proweſs of the Engliſh, as well as over-awed by the ſtrength of mind and penetration of Lord Clive, they were obliged to grant the requeſt, although reluctantly. Having therefore ordered the *ſunnuds* or patents to be drawn up in the manner that had been deſired, they delivered them into the hands of Lord Clive. Thus a buſineſs of ſuch magnitude was done and finiſhed in leſs time than would have been taken up for the ſale of a head of cattle. The Lord having accompliſhed his purpoſe, returned to the ſeat of his command."

VOL. II.

" Matters have come to ſuch a paſs, that the books and memoirs, compoſed by the Engliſh upon intereſted reports, have come to be truſted as ſo many vouchers; whereas they convey only ſome faint idea of the exterior and bark, but not of the pith, or real reaſon of the antient inſtitutions. Meanwhile, as theſe ſtrangers are men of penetration, and extreme keenneſs of mind, and they have been ſent by God Almighty to chaſtiſe this guilty race of Hindoſtanees, ſo they are come at laſt to make no account of the natives from the higheſt to the loweſt."

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" The Governor, in the month of the firſt Rabi of the year 1186, came to Moorſhedabad, where he ſpent two months and a half in putting in order the affairs of the country. He reduced the Nawaub's allowance to ſixteen lacks, ſo that thoſe ill-fated men, and eſpecially the Moorſhedabad penſioners, who in theſe hard times have not a

ſingle reſource under the canopy of the Hindoſtanee heaven, are reduced to ſuch miſeries as GOD relieve mankind from !

" Men's minds were engroſſed by the diſſentions in the Council, and by the fate of Governor Huſhtin, (i. e. Haſtings). This man has been endowed by nature with a keen penetrating genius, and a ſuperior intelligence; and his wiſdom in matters of ſtate and in politics, has not been equalled by any one. Mahomed Reza Khan, who has a great deal of haſtineſs as well as inconſtancy in his diſpoſition, no ſooner obſerved the prevalence of General Clavering's party, than he conceived a deſire of joining him, and opened a correſpondence with the General and his adherents. Such a ſtep could not but diſpleaſe the Governor, who however ſaid nothing.*

" Meanwhile the General recommended him to the offices of Deputy of the Nizamut, and alſo to the General Fodjdary, or Criminal Juſticiary. Mahomed Reza Khan ſet out on the 15th Ramazan, 1189, and arrived on the 2d Shevval at Moorſhedabad, where he applied himſelf cloſely to the buſineſs of his office; and the inhabitants of that great city, accuſtomed to him long ago, ſhewed themſelves ſubmiſſive to his authority. He, on his ſide, pleaſed with a return of good fortune, took care to diſplay broad open the ſtandard of authority and command."

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" From the time of the death of General Clavering there accrued to the Governor an acceſſion of power. Mahomed Reza Khan was diſmiſſed from his two offices of principal Magiſtrate and Deputy to the Nawaub. Sadr-El-Hoc-Khan was appointed to ſucceed him, although the Governor himſelf muſt have been ſenſible that ſo much buſineſs was by all means above the old man's capacity and ſtrength.

* This is probably the true key to Mr. Haſtings's conduct reſpecting Mahomed Reza Khan.

Nevertheleſs,

Nevertheleſs, as he had proved himſelf an aſſiduous worſhipper at the altar of his power, and as great men are apt to prefer a perſonal attachment to a public qualification, the Governor deviſed theſe two offices for him as a reward for his attachment, although they ſeemed to be ſo much above his deſert."

VOL. III.

" As hatred to the Afghan name was hereditary in the Vizier's family, he undertook to put an end to the Rohilla dominion. Full of theſe ideas, he applied to Governor Huſhtin for his conſent to that expedition, and promiſed a ſum of money to the Engliſh for their aſſiſting him vigorouſly. The Governor had no orders from the Company to ſend troops out of the Engliſh dominions, for the purpoſe of making conqueſts; but Sujah Dowla prepared himſelf for a war, with a promiſe of being ſupported. The Rohilla Princes, young, ignorant, and proud, preferred war to a payment. The time appointed by the Omnipotent Avenger was come. Sujah Dowla, informed of their obſtinacy, put himſelf at the head of his victorious troops, and marched into their country.

" The engagement commenced by the artillery of the Engliſh. The Rohillas were ſoon thrown into a complete diſorder, and fled in crowds towards the fields, but in reality to the regions of eternity. Hafiz Rhamet, without being diſmayed by the ſlaughter which ſurrounded him, ſtood his ground with a firmneſs and an intrepidity that did him honour. He was followed every where by a number of faithful men, all reſolving to ſhed their blood in his company; and he was ſeen whereever the danger called for his preſence, until at laſt a ball of cannon came, pierced his heroic breaſt through and through, and parted his ſoul from his body.

" Sujah Dowla, after this ſignal victory, being become maſter of the country, ſpread his victorious troops far and near, with orders to put to the ſword all that ſhould appear in arms, or did not ſubmit.

" Although, according to the ſcriptural ſentence, the moment of death is not to be advanced or retarded by a ſingle inſtant, and a delay is undoubtedly beyond the reach of human power, neverthleſs, as the divine goodneſs, inſtead of bringing forth the events of this world by abrupt tranſitions, hath vouchſafed to make them grow out of one another by a concatenation of ſecond cauſes, ſome of which remain concealed, while others become open to view; theſe laſt are often attended to, and obſerved by men of ſenſe, who diſcover in the planning them tokens of an attentive wiſdom."

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" It is in conſequence of ſuch and the like diviſions (alluding to the factions in the Court of Poonah, ſubſiſting previous to the Mahratta wars), that moſt of the ſtrong holds, nay almoſt the whole of Hindoſtan, have come into poſſeſſion of the Engliſh. He (i. e. Mr. Haſtings) knew, that this Prince Ragonaut Row, being himſelf a man of importance, and the ſon of a man of importance in that nation, there was no doubt but ſome great men would join him of themſelves, and that ſome others would be eaſily brought to do the ſame, whether by perſuaſion or force; and as the Engliſh, led by a deſtiny which deſigned to make uſe of that nation for puniſhing a wicked thoughtleſs race of men, unmindful of their GOD, had ſo ſucceſsfully fought battles, made ſuch amazing conqueſts, and with a deal of eaſe puſhed their victories as far as almoſt within ſight of Shah-jehan-abad, the capital of Hindoſtan; ſo the Governor thought the war in the Decan would prove full as eaſy; and that after beating and diſperſing the Mahratta armies, it would prove an eaſy taſk to reduce Haider Naic (i. e. Hyder Ali) to ſtraits; after which operation he might, without any anxiety from the French, or other European powers, and without much hindrance from the Princes of India, bring, in a certain number of years, and with proper management, all Hindoſtan into ſubmiſſion, and then ſit down in eaſe and content to enjoy his proſperity.

" It

" It was reported, that this ſcheme of the Governor's not having met with Mr. Francis' and Mr. Wheeler's approbation, two members of the Committee, the ycontended that they ought to remain ſatisfied with ſo much dominion as they had already acquired, without ſtretching their feet out of their frontiers; and it may be that ſuch likewiſe were the orders from the Council of Europe, and ſuch the ſafeſt party; but the Governor, diſapproving of ſuch timid opinions, took upon himſelf ſingly all the riſques of this buſineſs, and ſet out in earneſt with this war."

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" Now that the whole Council is reduced to the Governor's own perſon, and to that of Mr. Wheeler, he is become ſole maſter of binding and unbinding, of appointing and diſmiſſing in every department, without either control or diſpute. Time only can ſhew in what manner ſhall end theſe diſſentions, as well as theſe troubles, which are juſt commencing; and time alone ſhall determine what completion his ſchemes are likely to have. Then ſhall we know ſomething of what is to become of the poor injured people of this land, who now have no other friend, and no other comforter but GOD ALMIGHTY.

" The princes of Hindoſtan lived amongſt their people and amongſt their nobles, as kind and condeſcending parents amongſt their children; nor did they ſuffer the duſt of ſorrow to darken the hearts of any of the people of GOD, by a ſhew of tenderneſs to one part of the people, and of rudeneſs to the other; for they looked upon them all with an equal eye; ſo that for ſeveral ages together, down to the times of Shah Jehan, every thing in Hindoſtan was quietneſs, love, and harmony. It is only ſince the times of Aoreng-ſib-Aalem-ghir, his ſon, a prince extremely warlike and ambitious, that evils have crept upon the land. Matters grew worſe in the reign of Ferok-ſyur.

" Amidſt the ſtrange events which theſe revolutions have brought about, the introduction of European foreigners in the heart of the land

land is an important one. The wiſe men of Europe have been caſting their eyes upon the conqueſt of India, and have contrived to atchieve great part of that conqueſt, having already acquired an abſolute dominion in ſeveral tracts. But ſuch is the complete difference and the total diſſimilarity betwixt the manners of their own country and the cuſtoms and uſages of Hindoſtan, that all the endeavours of their chief rulers, and all the reſorts they have put in motion, have anſwered no purpoſe at all; nor has the face of regulation in the country, and of eaſe to the inhabitants, made its appearance yet. But over and above theſe conſiderations it may be ſaid with great truth, that ſuch is the averſion which the Engliſh openly ſhew for the company of the natives, and ſuch the diſdain which they betray for them, that no love and no coalition, can take root between the conquerors and the conquered.

" Perhaps it is the peculiar fate of the people of this land, that after having been ſubjected by Providence to the yoke of theſe ſtrangers, they are ſtill deſtined to find them ſuch inattentive rulers, as do not think it worth their while to mind the welfare of thoſe proſtrated at their feet; and ſuch ſupreme maſters, as to make nothing of leaving them at the diſpoſal of their own ſervants and ſubſtitutes; although nothing ſhould be ſo important to the Sovereign as the care of the ſubject, and he ought never to loſe ſight of the Indian adage—

" Do not refer his complaint to your Divan,
" Since his complaint is probably againſt that very Divan."

The Engliſh are a race of men who are keen-ſighted, and full of policy and ſecrecy; but none ſo much as the Governor himſelf, whoſe breaſt is a caſket full of inacceſſible ſecrets, and a repoſitory of impenetrable views and projects. Who is the man that can make him ſpeak againſt his mind?"

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The concluſion of this hiſtory, excellent as it is throughout, does the writer peculiar credit; and it affords a ſtriking proof how indelibly the ſame immutable ſentiments of juſtice and rectitude are engraven on the hearts of the truly virtuous and benevolent, under every variety and modification of religion, country, and climate. No diverſity of names or of ſects, can obliterate the grand and eternal diſtinction between the friends and the foes of humanity.

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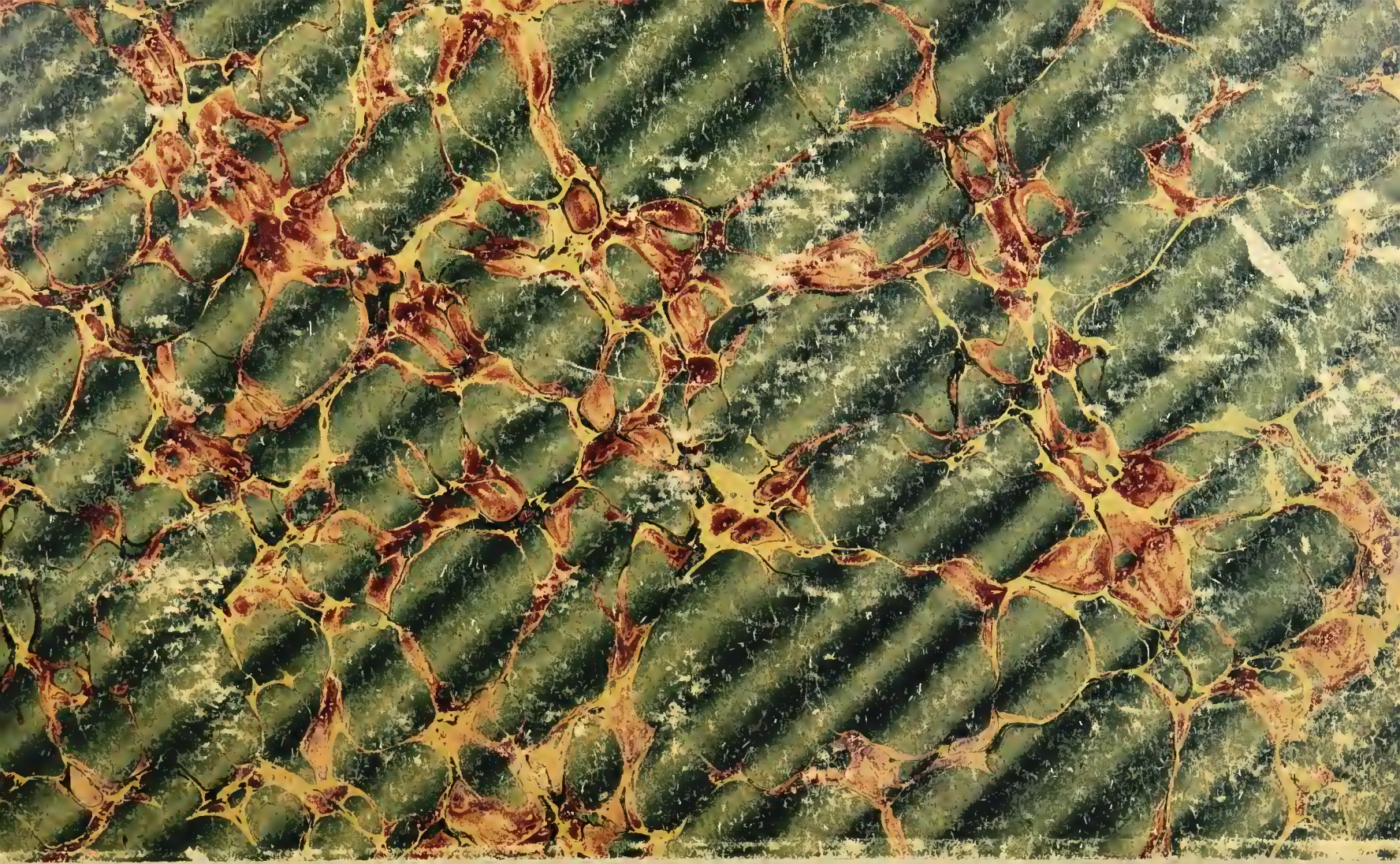
"When ordinances affect only the impotent, without having any energy over the headſtrong and refractory, they ceaſe to be laws, and they diſhonour all government. After all, it muſt be remembered, that as princes and kings are reputed the ſhadows of God, they ought, in humble imitation of his divine attributes, to accommodate themſelves to the diſpoſitions and minds of their ſubjects, ſo as to carry an equal hand over them, without exception, without predilection, and without ſhewing a diſlike or hatred to any ſpecies of men. Such impartiality is incumbent upon princes, if they intend to be the fathers and cheriſhers of the people entruſted to their care; and if they really wiſh that every man ſhould look up to the monarch as to his benevolent forgiving father. This is a duty incumbent upon them, if they wiſh that every one ſhould think himſelf happy under their government; for the ſubject muſt be cheriſhed in the very palm of the monarch's hand, if the monarch really intends to diſcharge his duty, and to let the world ſee that he feels all the meaning of theſe verſes of Saadi's—

"That beneficent Being which from its inviſible treaſury
"Feeds with an equal hand the believer, the unbeliever, the weak and the ſtrong,
"Might, if it had ſo pleaſed him, have created men of one opinion,
"Or have converted them at one word to one and the ſame religion."

If then converſion is intended, lenity and benevolence, eſpecially to the poor and impotent, will go a great way in reconciling the hearts of mankind. Let then kings and monarchs look day and night into the

the book containing the actions and ſayings of the prince of prophets and chief of meſſengers. Let them admire with what ſweetneſs and forbearance that noble being uſed the unbelievers of his time, his perſonal enemies; and how he opened the receſſes of thoſe ſtubborn underſtandings with the key of his goodneſs and liberality. He gained their hearts at laſt ſo far, as to convert them into ſo many friends. Never take your ownſelf for the ſtandard to which virtue can riſe in a virtuous heart."

FINIS.

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